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Ritty's Knitting Needles.—Frontispiece.



“A travelling carriage, with four horses, dashed through the
turnpike and up the hill.”

p. 49.

LITTLE KITTY'S KNITTING-NEEDLES,

AND

 OTHER  STORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "OILED FEATHER SERIES."

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LITTLE KITTY'S KNITTING-NEEDLES.


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LITTLE KITTY'S KNITTING-NEEDLES.

CHAPTER I.



IN the part of the world in which the incidents of our story occurred, there live a number of highly respectable labourers, who are possessed of small properties of their own. These little properties have been handed down from father to son, in some instances, for many generations; and the different families seem to be almost part and parcel of the soil itself. But now many of these families are breaking up, and the little estates are purchased by neighbouring proprietors and absorbed in their large properties.

It is a very beautiful part of the country. Hill and dale, wood and river, diversify the scene; and the church spires and towers, peeping up here and there, lead us to hope that amid this beautiful scenery there may be found something more beautiful still,—even souls knowing and loving God, and living for a world fairer and more beautiful than all the loveliness around.

There are districts in that part of the country that are famous for knitting. Almost every one handles the “pricks,” as the knitting-needles are called. Knitting is part of the business of life, and no small part of its pleasures. There are even knitting-parties, and no end of gossip at them; and, in fact, knitting forms a prominent part of the thoughts, words and deeds of the female part of these good people's lives.

Among them lived a worthy man and his wife, who were possessed of about forty acres of land. They were industrious and thrifty; they lived happily together, and were a good father and mother to a large family of boys and girls; and if only their little estate had been clear from debt, their hearts would have been as light as the lark's when she soars to heaven in the clear morning air, leaving behind her a more glorious train than ever adorned a monarch in his court,—a train of clear and melodious song.

But John Bulwer had one great trouble upon his heart, and, happy as he and his wife Mary were together, this trouble kept them awake many a night. Their little estate, as we said, was heavily in debt,—not through any fault of their's; for they had always been prudent and thrifty;

but it had been handed down to them with heavy encumbrances, and they did not know the moment when the lawyer, in whose power they were, would turn them out.

When John Bulwer sowed a crop he often sighed, and said to himself, "Ah, who knows who will reap this crop?" When he did any little job about the house, the strokes of the hammer were as though they knocked against his own heart, as he said, "Who can tell for whom I am doing this?"

At length the evil day really came. One morning the postman, who went round that way, left a letter for poor John, and it contained a notice from the lawyer to pay up the mortgage (meaning the money lent on the security of the farm), for, unless it was paid within six months, the farm must be sold.

There was sore distress in John Bulwer's house when the contents of this letter became known; for there was no doubt but that the farm must go. Looking forward to this evil day, the worthy man had often tried to raise the money; but he could not, and now he felt that in a few months the old homestead must be left, and he must go forth into the wide world.

Never did six months pass so quickly for the poor Bulwers, as those succeeding the day of notice; and at last the evil time drew near, and the farm was put up to auction. It brought less than was expected; some of the interest could not be paid; then followed a sale of the poor man's furniture, and, as he himself anticipated, he was thrown out upon the wide world.

John Bulwer's good conduct and kind,

neighbourly ways secured him many friends in this sad state of affairs. Every one pitied him, and many were willing to do what they could for him; but as almost all had large families to support, and only too many were themselves laden with debt, they could not do much.

The poor fellow was grateful for all this kindness; but he was not the man to eat the bread of idleness or charity, when he could work. So he speedily cast about him as to what he was to do. A very humble cottage, at the foot of a neighbouring hill, was to be had for a trifling rent, and that he hired for a dwelling; and a situation, offered by a neighbouring farmer, promised to give him just bread enough for his little ones. John Bulwer was to be a kind of head man over the farm, turning his hand to whatever was wanted, superintending the

men, and giving a general eye to his employer's interests.

For a while all went on tolerably well in the little cottage; but there was more trouble at hand. Scarlet fever broke out in the family, and swept away one after another of the children, until, when the disease had passed away from the house, it was found that but one child was left, and that one the weakest of the little party. Kitty Bulwer had never been strong; but she survived the fever, and lived when all the rest were laid low in their graves.

Let not my young reader rejoice in his or her strength. Say not, "I am too strong and well to be near death; I will think about my soul when I come to die." Ah! how soon the strongest are laid low! Disease will soon take away all your strength. In one day or one night, you may be

reduced to such a state of weakness that you cannot either stand or speak. Preparations for another world should never be put off because we are strong and well.

So little Kitty was the only one left, and upon her the fierce disease left its mark; for during her illness her hands became contracted, so that she was not able, for a considerable time, to help herself in the least.

In the midst of all this loss John Bulwer murmured not. He said, in the words of the stricken patriarch, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." He read about Job, that man of patience; and, still better, he read about Jesus, the man of sorrows, and he said, "The disciple is not above his master." He bowed his head, and, amid all his trials, gave thanks to God.

Very grateful indeed were the stricken parents that their little daughter Kitty had been spared to them. True, her hands were a pitiable sight, and she was evidently very delicate, and probably would continue so all her life. Still, she was their child; and not to be left altogether childless was a great mercy.

Some persons are ever thinking of how much they have lost, and never look at what has been spared. Because the clouds are thick, they shut their eyes to the little rays of sunshine which break through them; and thus they miss the alleviation and comfort which may generally be found even amid very sore trials. What is there so bad that it could not have been worse?

Mr. and Mrs. Bulwer often went on Sunday (which was their only day of leisure) to look at the graves of their five little darlings, all lying side by side in

the church-yard, and there they dropped many a warm tear; but often, also, they stood over little Kitty's humble bed at night, and watched her heavenly countenance as she slept, and then they shed a tear of gratitude and joy as they looked on her and thought that they had one child left.

Dear reader! always have an eye for your mercies: if you have one eye for your sorrows (and who can help seeing trials and troubles when they come upon him?), have the other for your mercies, and you will find that your heart will thus, by God's grace, be kept from sinful repining, and have a spring for exertion, and strength for endurance, until the time of trial be overpast.

No one who knew little Kitty Bulwer would have been in the least surprised at the delight her parents took in her. She

was obedient, gentle, cheerful, and loved God, and showed that love in her daily life. Always had Kitty a cheerful word and smile, and the light danced in her bright eyes just as the sunbeams do in the rippling mountain streams.

Kitty's great grief in life was her crippled hands. She had been very useful about the house before the scarlet fever attacked her. She had delighted in helping her mother in her daily household work; and her heart sank at the idea of being always useless,—always an encumbrance,—unable to do any thing to earn a trifle to help in the expenses of the house.

It is very true, little Kitty knew how to knit. Almost the very babies round about knew how to knit, and such an intelligent little girl as she was not likely to be behindhand. But of what advantage was this, seeing that her poor fingers were

now so contracted—and, indeed, almost twisted—that they could not hold the needles any more? She could not grasp the thin things with her contorted fingers; and without knitting-needles it was, of course, impossible to knit.

Often did Kitty lie awake at night, pondering over her sad affliction, and thinking, “What can I possibly do, to help my father and mother?” At one time she fancied that she could in some way tie the needles to her fingers; and, when that failed, she got some cobbler’s wax, and tried to stick them there; but it was all in vain; the steel needles seemed determined to have no more to do with Kitty, and at length she was obliged to give up her experiments in despair.

But, though obliged to give up her experiments on the steel needles, she still continued to ponder in her mind whether

something could not be done, and at last a bright idea flashed across her mind. True, she could not hold steel knitting-needles; but, as her fingers had not lost all their power, perhaps she might be able to do something with larger ones,—the only drawback to this idea being the coarseness of such work. All the people around her were knitting fine articles, and for them they procured a ready sale. But would work done with coarse needles sell at all?

“I can never know unless I try,” said Kitty; “and if only I have a blessing on my efforts, I shall do well, in spite of all my disadvantages.”

With Kitty Bulwer this was the grand point. She observed that, in spite of many days of sharp winds, the little lambs throve, and grew into sheep, and also that, with all the vicissitudes of the

weather, the crops came to perfection; and "surely," said she, "I can do a great deal, and my work will prosper, if only it have a blessing from on high." This idea of "the blessing" gradually became a very prominent one in Kitty's mind; and the more she thought about it, and the more she prayed for it, the more did she expect it, and great things from it and with it.

A neighbouring carpenter, who had a great regard for Kitty's father, became the little girl's helper, and he promised to make her some needles of wood. Kitty visited him at his shop, and he tried her hands to see how small and fine a needle she could hold, and sent her away with the joyful intelligence that she should have them ready for work by the following Monday morning.

Kitty's father and mother fell very

readily into her plans, and provided her with some coarse wool. They were only too much delighted to find that she could occupy herself usefully in any way. They knew that idle time hangs heavy upon the hands, and they remembered, good as Kitty was, that what the Christian poet had written was true :—

“For Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

The head full of knowledge, the heart full of love, and the hands full of work, and, with the blessing of God, we may be kept out of much evil. It is a mistake to suppose that idleness is happiness. Very few are more truly miserable than the idle; and it is well known by medical men that idleness will even make people ill: it gives them what the French call *ennui*. And when people are troubled with *ennui* they get cross, and do not

know what to do with themselves, and become fretful both in body and mind,—many a time fancy themselves a prey to all sorts of diseases and trials.

Kitty Bulwer would have always found something to do; but to have a regular resource like this was quite a bright prospect.

It required some practice on Kitty's part to be able to hold the needles, and her first attempts at knitting were very awkward; but she soon got used to them, and, by degrees, she became quite handy at her work.

Even in the humblest spheres of life we are liable to trials and troubles which will test our Christian character; and, humble as Kitty Bulwer's position now was, she found herself tried in it. Her rough work could not, of course, for one moment be compared with the fine knitting done in the neighbourhood around; and, indeed,

she did not pretend that it could. She did not exhibit it to any person,—much less make any boast of it. Still, she found trouble in this humble work.

The carpenter who had befriended her, and made her needles, had a daughter, whose name was Nancy; and this Nancy was not a well-disposed girl. So long as she could have every thing her own way, she seemed amiable enough; but as Nancy could not always have her own way, any more than other people, we need not be surprised at hearing that she was very often out of temper. Nancy Sawyer was full of self-conceit. She was also jealous and selfish, and, in fact, had in her character many elements of misery for others as well as herself.

Just now this unamiable girl was very wroth with Kitty Bulwer. It so happened that she wanted her father to turn

an old box into a rabbit-hutch for her, while he was engaged in making little Kitty Bulwer's knitting-needles, and, because he would not put by his work and turn at once to her's, she flew into a dreadful passion.

"You never do any thing for *me*," cried Nancy Sawyer, "although I am your own daughter; but any brat that comes in the way and wheedles you, you'll do any thing they like."

"Nancy! Nancy!" said the carpenter, "think before you say such an untruth. Didn't I mend your hoe and spade for you the other day almost as soon as you gave them to me?"

"Ay, ay," cried Nancy, "because you wanted me to work in the garden; that was for you as well as for myself. But you won't make this hutch that I want only for myself."

"'Tis true," answered the carpenter, "that I hurried with your hoe and spade, because you wanted them for a useful purpose; and now I am hurrying with Kitty Bulwer's knitting-needles, because it is a useful job; and, indeed, more than that, it is an important one to her."

"Ay, ay; but Kitty is not your daughter; and I think you ought to help your own daughter before any one else."

"Nancy," answered the carpenter, "we may be selfish in what we do for our own relations, as well as in what we do for ourselves; and I should be selfish if, to please you, I took your plaything in hand before these necessary things for a sick neighbour."

"I hope they'll never come to any good!" passionately exclaimed the wicked girl, in a high tone of voice; "and I don't believe they will. -What can a twisted-

fingere creature like her do with knitting-needles? I don't believe she'll ever make a sixpence with all her knitting!" And, so saying, Nancy Sawyer flung herself out of her father's workshop in a great rage.

The carpenter was a kind-hearted man, but he was sorely in fault in not correcting his daughter. The consequence was, her temper grew worse and worse, and she promised fair to be a plague to him as well as to herself. Contenting himself with not doing the hutch, and keeping on at the knitting-needles, the carpenter took no more notice of his daughter's passion. But the matter did not pass so easily out of Nancy's mind. This evil girl determined to spite Kitty whenever she could, and many were the plans for doing so, which she turned over in her mind.

Meanwhile, Kitty Bulwer was turning over many plans in her mind as to what

she should do with the produce of her work. Two great objects she had in view; and, as her father had told her that she might have for herself whatever she was able to earn, she determined to divide her earnings between the two great aims she wished to carry out. One of Kitty's great desires was to add something to her father and mother's comfort; the other was to be able to send something to the missionaries, in whose work she had taken the liveliest interest almost ever since she could understand any thing. There was to be one stocking out of each pair for Kitty's father and mother, and another stocking for the missionaries; and if only her work were blessed, Kitty hoped to do great things.

"Great things, indeed!" perhaps some of our young readers exclaim; "how could she be so foolish as to expect that? Per-

haps she might do *something*; but to expect to do great things is rather too much. If Kitty could give a donation of a thousand dollars, or even a hundred, it might be something great; but not with the humble means at her disposal."

But, strange as it may appear, Kitty Bulwer really did aspire to doing something great. It was one of her great encouragements in thus trying to make use of her crippled fingers, that she might be eminently useful; and she thus reasoned with herself:—"One-half of my money is to buy Bibles and good books, to send to those who have none. It may be that a Bible, or a good book, or some missionary's labour, for which my money will help pay, will be the means of the conversion of souls; and would it not be worth even a whole lifetime of labour, to be the instrument of bringing even one soul to

glory, or of rescuing one from the fearful horrors of the lost?"

Thus reasoned Kitty Bulwer with herself; and she *determined*, with God's blessing, to succeed. "I will try," said she, "again and again, until I am able to knit with these needles, even if it takes me years before I succeed."

A very useful lesson does little Kitty teach us all. How apt are we to think that we cannot do any thing! One says, "I am too young;" another, "I am too old;" another, "I am too poor;" another, "I am too small," and so on; few, comparatively, remembering that God requires from a man according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. Every one can do something in God's kingdom and to promote his glory, and oftentimes he uses the very feeblest instruments to bring about the end he would

have accomplished. But the great point is, to be *determined*. If we *make up our minds* that, with God's blessing, we *will* do what is right, he will help us in carrying out that determination: we must do our part;—he will not fail in doing his.

Dear young reader! sometimes remember poor little Kitty Bulwer with her twisted fingers, and think, What can I do? and be determined to do it.

CHAPTER II.



AFTER many attempts, the young knitter succeeded very well; and great was her joy, and great also the delight of her parents, when she exhibited to them the first pair of finished stockings. The carpenter also was highly delighted; he was rejoiced that his needles had done so well, and his benevolent heart was glad, as he thought that he had been the means of benefiting a fellow-creature. Several of the neighbours also came in, and shared in the family joy, and spoke encouragingly to Kitty of her work. Many of them thought that it would have been quite a

disgrace for a woman or girl not to be able to handle the needles: so they also, even though they rejoiced on no higher ground, were yet well pleased.

There was only one person who was not pleased; and that was Nancy Sawyer. That evil-minded girl had been for a long time on the watch to do Kitty Bulwer some harm, and was sorely grieved that, as yet, no opportunity had been afforded her. True, she had been able to give some vent to her spite; for when Kitty sat knitting on the sunny side of a neighbouring hedge, singing now and again snatches of her favourite hymns, she used to come and twit her about her failures and mock at her twisted fingers. At times she used to put her own fingers into strange, twisted shapes, and hold them up before Kitty's face, and then she used to pretend to try and knit in an awkward fashion; but she

had been obliged to content herself with these evil ways: she dared not really lift a hand against her little neighbour. Nevertheless, Nancy Sawyer kept constantly in view her intention of playing Kitty as scurvy a trick as she could; and the great desire of her mind was to get hold of the newly-finished pair of stockings, and to destroy them if possible. "That will be tenfold better," said Nancy, "than hindering her as she goes on. That will bring all her work to nothing in a moment; that will pay her out for all I owe her, and I shall have my revenge."

In the course of a little time Nancy Sawyer got the opportunity she desired. Kitty Bulwer's new stockings were lying on the window-sill, and Nancy spied them as she passed by that way. Cautiously did she peep through the window, to see if any one were at hand; and when she

had made fully sure of the room's being empty, she took her scissors from her pocket and gave the stockings several small cuts; then, with a wicked smile upon her mouth, she crept off as quietly as she could.

When Nancy Sawyer had fairly made her escape, and was out in the fields, she put her hands to her sides, and threw back her head, and burst out into a loud fit of laughter. "Ha, ha!" cried she; "I've done it for you now, my fine lady: you'll stand in the way of my hutches again, won't you? I think I've paid you off pretty handsomely now—ha, ha, ha!" and Nancy roared out with laughter again. Nancy Sawyer's heart was glad for the moment. She had just such happiness as the devils have when they are able to do mischief; and, indeed, she had just yielded herself as an instrument to Satan, to do

what he desired. Whoever spites another, is thereby doing the evil spirit's work. Malice, spite, revenge, are all the devil's delight; and let no young reader of this story yield himself or herself to Satan, a ready instrument to do his will. Is not the very thought of such a thing horrible? The bare idea of being an instrument of the devil ought to make us shudder, and deter us from rendering evil for evil.

When Kitty Bulwer discovered her misfortune, her little heart was almost broken. A kind neighbour who was going to the next town, where the stockings were generally bought, called to take Kitty's pair. The good woman had all along taken an interest in the child's efforts, and had promised to do her best to sell her stockings together with her own; and, although no one knew it, she had even made up her mind to buy the

stockings herself, if she could not find a purchaser. "'Tis a brave thing," said this honest woman, "for that young creature to work so hard with those crippled fingers; and I'll be bound she has some good way in her head of spending what she earns. If she does get some of my money, it won't go to any bad use; some one will be the better of it."

Mrs. Wilson was a right cheery woman, one who was always glad to do good to others, and who made the best of every thing as it turned up. So, humming a tune, she made her appearance at Kitty Bulwer's house.

"Here I am," said Mrs. Wilson, throwing down a large bundle; "here is some of my girl's fine work going into town, and I'm come for your coarse stockings, Kitty; fine capital stockings for some big giant: why, one pair of them would make a

dozen of our's. Folks think your stockings won't sell," said Mrs. Wilson, "but I'm sure they will. I think I know somebody who will buy them. They're capital for any rheumatic or gouty people, or for drawing on over the others. I never saw any of these in the market: so you'll have the market all to yourself; and who knows, Kitty, but you'll get a name for coarse stockings, and make a fortune in the end?"

Kitty laughed at the idea of the fortune, and laid hold of her stockings to put them up in paper.

"Stop! stop!" said Mrs. Wilson; "let me run my eye over them. I should like to know well what I'm recommending. I must be able to say, 'I *know* they're good work.'"

Kitty handed her friend the stockings, and fixed her eyes upon her, hoping to see

a look of approbation upon her face. Mrs. Wilson was herself one of the best knitters in the neighbourhood, and therefore her opinion would be worth something; and in Kitty's mind, if it were favourable, she felt pretty sure that the stockings would be sold. Judge, therefore, of her distress when she saw Mrs. Wilson's eyebrows lifted up, and then when she perceived a frown gathering upon her brow!

"They're as good as I could make them. Indeed, I've done my best," sobbed Kitty, as she burst into tears; for Mrs. Wilson had steadily fixed her eyes upon the stockings, and was evidently in a high state of displeasure.

"You have done your best, I believe, my poor child," said her friend, "and the stockings are as well knitted as if you had been paid a ten-dollar note for doing them; but look here!" And she showed poor

Kitty the little cuts in the wool. "How did these come here?"

When Kitty saw the cuts, her heart was ready to break. In a moment all her golden visions of the good she should do, and of help for her father, vanished from her mind, and she felt as if this calamity would quite crush her spirit.

"Come, Kitty; we must not waste our time in crying over the matter. There is some mystery here: these are the cuts of some sharp instrument, and, as they are in more places than one, my belief is that they have not come here by accident. We must unravel this mystery. What has happened once may happen perhaps again; and 'twill never do to knit stockings to have them cut in pieces in this way. If these stockings have been cut by design, the person that cut them must have wished to do you some harm,—that's quite

plain. Now, who is there hereabouts that has ever tried to do you any harm?"

"The only one that ever was unkind to me," sobbed Kitty, "was Nancy Sawyer; but I have no reason to think she cut the stockings. Indeed, I don't know that she has been this way at all. Oh, dear! it was a cruel thing to do!"

"We must try and find out more about it," said Mrs. Wilson; "but, meanwhile, let us not be idle. I never like to lose any time in useless fretting. Let us see what we can do to repair the loss. The best thing you can do, Kitty, is to set about a new pair of stockings at once: they'll be ready against next market-day; and you sha'n't want for wool, for I'll buy these stockings from you for the price of the wool. I want a piece of net for our fruit-trees, and this will just do to make it: so you can start again, and every thing will

turn out for the best. If you asked a blessing on your work, not even this sad misfortune can prevent its coming. Now good-by." And Mrs. Wilson took her departure, with a great many thoughts in her head, leaving poor Kitty standing at the cottage-door with a great many tears in her eyes.

"I'll unravel this mystery," said Mrs. Wilson to herself, "even if it costs me fifty dollars." And, ruminating on the matter, turning it over again and again in her mind, she trudged along to the market town.

The triumphing of the wicked is short. An eye is upon them when they do not think of it, and their evil is brought to light. So was it in the present case. Nancy Sawyer was destined to be discovered in a very unexpected way.

As Mrs. Wilson was going to the mar-

ket town with her bundle of knitting, her way lay through the very fields where Nancy Sawyer had been giving vent to her delight and exultation at having successfully accomplished her evil deed; and, as she walked along, she saw a poor old man, and apparently his little daughter, lying near the fence by the wayside. Mrs. Wilson was not the woman to pass by any one in distress without a kind word: so she stopped and spoke to the poor people. The old man said he had had very little to eat that day; "and indeed," said he, "we have not met with any one who would give us any thing. The only person we have seen this way was a girl, that we thought was mad; and she frightened my poor child, here, almost out of her very wits."

Mrs. Wilson's curiosity was a good deal stirred at this. She did not know of any

one's being insane in the neighbourhood: so she put a few questions to the poor people, to find out something more about the matter.

"What kind of girl was she?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"A tall, slouching-looking girl, with a red handkerchief crossed upon her breast, and a straw bonnet with a yellow faded ribbon."

"Why, sure as you live," said Mrs. Wilson, "it must have been Nancy Sawyer. But she's not mad. And what did she say or do to frighten you, my child?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"Why, she was so wild, like," answered the little girl. "She didn't see us, for we were then lying at the other side of the fence, under yon ferns; but she talked to herself, and threw herself about, and was quite mad, like. I couldn't hear all she

said, for we were not close enough; but she was saying she had done for somebody, and she cried out, 'Ha, ha, ha!' very often."

"As far as we could make out," chimed in the old man, "somebody had angered her, and she had been spiting the person, and had her revenge, and she was delighted at whatever she had done."

"Ho! ho!" said Mrs. Wilson to herself; "I'm on the scent now. That girl was Nancy Sawyer, and I expect she has been cutting Kitty Bulwer's stockings." And, so saying, she gave a penny or two to the poor folks, and went on her way.

CHAPTER III.



WHEN Mrs. Wilson returned from market, she came back by Kitty's cottage. The little girl had expected to have received her first earnings just at this time: so it was a sore trial to her to see Mrs. Wilson without having her hopes realized. There was a smile, however, on that good woman's face which made Kitty feel sure that she had something interesting to tell.

"I have it all," said Mrs. Wilson. "There can be little doubt that Nancy Sawyer did all the mischief. That's the way she took to spite you. I'll go to her

father, and get her such a punishment as will do her good for the rest of her life."

It was some time before Kitty Bulwer could fully persuade herself that Nancy Sawyer could have been guilty of so wanton an act of mischief. At last, however, she came to be of Mrs. Wilson's opinion.

"I fear," said she, after thinking for a long time, "she did it. But don't get her punished: I'd rather lose the stockings than have her suffer."

Mrs. Wilson could not understand this at all. She thought that a good whipping was just what Nancy Sawyer deserved: and, indeed, she went so far as to say that she should have no objection to give it to her herself,— "the good-for-nothing hussy," said she; "but she'll suffer for it some way or other."

Mrs. Wilson was rather vexed that

Kitty would not let her go to the carpenter to get his daughter severely punished. She said, however, that it was Kitty's stockings that had been spoiled, and that it was her affair, and that she would leave it where it was, as such was her wish; and, after encouraging Kitty to begin another pair of stockings as soon as she could get the coarse worsted, she took her leave.

No doubt now remained on Kitty Bulwer's mind as to who had injured her work; and she was the more confirmed in her belief by the fact that Nancy Sawyer avoided her as much as she could. That evil girl was not without a conscience; and her conscience would not let her look Kitty in the face.

"I must pray for that girl," said Kitty. "We are told to pray for those that despitefully use us and persecute us; and

if she goes on in her present temper, she'll be sure to come to ruin." ~

From that day forth Nancy Sawyer was never an entire day out of Kitty Bulwer's mind. Her one great wish was that she should come to repentance and not perish at the last. Kitty's parents had the same desire. They could not but feel sorely hurt at their poor child's having been so persecuted; but they were ready to bless them that persecuted them. They knew that was acceptable to God.

Sad as poor Kitty's misfortune was, she was not destined to be entirely disappointed in her desires of earning, both for doing good and for her parents. On the other hand, a double blessing was about to be bestowed upon her.

As the little girl had been so much put back by the loss of the first pair of stockings, she began earnestly to think what

she could do to repair the loss. At last she hit upon a thought.

Some little distance from Kitty's cottage lay the coach-road, and on that road was a very steep hill. The little girl, whenever she went that way, had observed that the horses generally stopped when half-way up the hill to take breath, and then it was necessary for some one to put a stone behind the wheels to prevent their slipping down the hill,—especially in frosty weather. As many of the carriages passing that way had only the driver on the outside, Kitty thought that if she took her needles and did her work by the roadside, she might be at hand to supply a stone for the wheels, and so might earn some pence.

The old man who kept the turnpike at the bottom of the hill agreed to give the child shelter in case of the weather's turn-
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ing out unexpectedly bad; and it was settled that she should go just when she liked and stay as long as she pleased. In this matter also the carpenter proved himself a friend. He promised to throw together a rough seat, or bench, for his young friend; and he suggested that she should have a couple of wedge-shaped pieces of wood, which would be lighter than stone to move, and would answer the purpose more effectually.

“Besides which,” said the carpenter, “it will look much better and more useful, like; and, perhaps, when folks see you with your regular tools they will be more inclined to give you something than if you just put a stone behind their wheels.”

The carpenter was as good as his word. He soon put together a rustic seat, and made the wedges, and Kitty took her

place by the roadside one sunshiny morning, with her needles in her hand and the wedges by her side.

Kitty was not discouraged because at first not many pence came to her lot. Her new stockings were getting on, and she was delivered from the cruel taunts of Nancy Sawyer, and the little she had received would buy wool for three or four pair more of stockings: so she thought she had no cause to complain. Kitty Bulwer was not one of those children who expect every thing to be done in a moment: she had learned patience in the school of affliction, and her contented mind enabled her to wait quietly for results.

There was, however, what some people would call a great piece of good luck in store for Kitty. One day a travelling-carriage, with four horses, dashed through the turnpike and up the hill. The driver,

in all probability, thought to surmount the hill at a gallop, and whipped and spurred his horses so as to reach the top in a single run; but, midway, the horses found their work too heavy for them, and the leaders, apparently quite out of breath, stumbled, and fell. Kitty was at her post. Had she not been, who can tell what fearful consequences might have ensued? For the carriage was heavily laden with luggage, and the great probability was that it would drag back horses and all, down the steep descent. Kitty, as we have said, was at her post, and, quick as thought, she was in the middle of the road, and in another moment her two wedges were pushed firmly under the hind-wheels. The driver soon saw that it was all right, and then leaped down to help to extricate the horses and to wait on the occupants of the carriage. These latter had been greatly

terrified. They consisted of a lady and her little daughter, and they were both as white as snow with fright, and their eyes were wet with tears: they felt that they had escaped from a great peril indeed. Kitty had by this time gone back to her seat and resumed her knitting.

“It is a kind providence that you have not all been destroyed,” said a gentleman who came up just at that moment: “you might have been killed, but for yonder little girl on that seat.”

“The horses cannot go on for some time,” said the driver; at which the lady said,—

“Come, Mary, and we’ll go and thank the little girl for having been the means of doing so much for us.”

This Mary was about Kitty’s own size; but she was even much more delicate in form. She was thin and pale, and it was

quite evident that she was not strong upon her feet: indeed, her feet were so wrapped up that it was difficult for her to walk. Young as she was, she was a martyr to rheumatism. Her bones often ached, and it was only by great care that she had been reared.

“Thank you, my little girl, a thousand times,” said the lady to Kitty; “for I believe that, under Providence, you have saved our lives.”

“Yes, thank you,” said Mary. “I am sure we shall never forget you: shall we, mother?”

Kitty curtsied and blushed, and at last she stammered out that she was very glad she had been of any use.

“I think, under God, you have saved our lives,” said the lady; “and I should like to give you some little acknowledgment of our thankfulness.” Whereupon,

having drawn a handsome silk purse from her pocket, she took five five-dollar notes from it, and put them into Kitty Bulwer's hand.

Nothing could have set Kitty more at ease than the lady's mention of her thankfulness to God.

"These are good people," thought she to herself. "They, no doubt, love and worship the same God that I do." And she now felt less inclined to slip away.

By way of putting the child more at her ease, the lady took up her knitting, and began to ask her about it; and Kitty, being communicative, gave her the whole account of their misfortunes,—of her brother's and sister's death, of her own illness, and of her efforts to help her parents and to do good.

"I had almost given up the hope of ever being rich enough to give them any real

help; but now I can," said the little girl, joyfully, as she looked at the money.

"You shall not be disappointed in your work, either," said the lady, who was greatly interested in Kitty's story. "I approve highly of your attempt to do something. I always help those whom I find endeavouring to help themselves, and I will buy a dozen pairs of your stockings as soon as they are ready. Here," said she, taking a card from her card-case and writing an address on it with pencil, "is the name of the place where we shall be staying for the next three months, and you can bring the stockings when they are done. They are to be a child's size; the size for this little girl,"—and the lady told Kitty to measure Mary's foot. "My daughter is subject to rheumatism, and these will do to draw over her feet."

By this time the carriage was put to


rights, and all was ready; and in a few moments the carriage and people were out of sight, and Kitty Bulwer remained by the roadside, almost fancying that all that had just passed was a dream.

People don't find bank-notes in their hands when they have been dreaming of them, and there was no denying that there they were in Kitty's hands: so she made the best of her way home. As she went along the road, she had some sore temptations about the money. Half of it seemed to be a great deal to give away, especially for one in her circumstances and while her dear parents were in want of so many things; and it was suggested to her mind that if she gave a quarter it would do very well, especially as it would be a great deal more than many of the neighbours gave. But Kitty held firm, and, after many arguments, and, indeed, no small

contention within herself, she determined that one-half should be given away.

“Is it,” said she to herself, “because God has blessed me above all expectation that I should draw back? I thought to have made a few cents, and then He should have had the half; and now that I have so much, shall I do less in proportion? No,” said she. “Half shall go to do good. The more liberal God is to us, the more liberal should we be in our gifts to him.”

CHAPTER IV.

 HE story of Kitty's wonderful adventure was soon noised abroad through the neighbourhood; and every one except Nancy Sawyer rejoiced at her prosperity. Among those who rejoiced most was good Mrs. Wilson.

"You remember," said she, "you asked a blessing on your work, Kitty; and you have received it, only in an unexpected way. All our blessings do not come on the road we expect them to travel; and this one has come a roundabout way. You remember that it is written that 'all things shall work *together* for good to them that love God;' and thus has it been

in your case. If your socks had not been cut, and if you had not thus lost your expected sale, you would not have tried to make up the loss by going to the hill. So, what you thought so dreadfully provoking has really turned out for your good."

Kitty Bulwer saw this, and she recognized in it all the more reason why she should give the half of the money to God's service: indeed, she felt she could have no blessing unless she did.

"And I hear you have an order for twelve pair," said Mrs. Wilson. "Well, that's grand; you'll never sell more than I wish you to do; and if I can give you any help, I will."

Kitty Bulwer worked away at her coarse stockings, and was getting well forward with the execution of her order, when a person rode up to her cottage-door. She soon knew whence he came, for he

had the same clothes on as those she saw on the man who drove the carriage. The man brought a note to Kitty, saying that the lady wished her to come at once to the place where she was staying, and to bring with her as many of the stockings as she had finished. He had instructions, also, to give her money to pay her fare by the stage-coach.

When Kitty Bulwer arrived, she was taken to a small room, where she saw, laid upon a sofa, the same feeble girl she had seen on the roadside,—little Mary. She was suffering from rheumatism, and now she tried to raise herself on the couch. “We sent for you,” said she, “to know if you would teach me to knit. I have been thinking, too, a great deal about your having been the means of saving our lives; and, as I wish to try and learn to knit, I should rather learn from you than

any one else. Mother will give you plenty of money if you will teach me: only, I am very slow at learning, and you must have a great deal of patience with me. Have you plenty of patience?"

Kitty said, "I'll be very glad to teach you to knit; and I hope I can be patient, for it took me a long time before I was handy enough to do any knitting, after my hands got bad."

"Perhaps it will take me ever so many months," said the sick girl.

"Oh, I don't mind how long: only"—and here Kitty burst into tears; the thought of her father and mother crossed her mind,—"only I should not like to be so long away from my parents."

"I'll take care of your parents," said a voice from the door, and at that moment Mary's mother entered, "if you only remain with my daughter until she has

learned." Then and there was the whole matter settled, and before long Mary let Kitty into her whole secret. "You see that I am now laid here; and although I can often run about, still I am often laid for whole weeks upon my sofa, or perhaps in bed, and then my time does not always pass very quickly, and I often keep thinking that I should be much happier if I had something to do,—especially if it were something that would help to make other people happy: so I have made up my mind to learn to knit. And when I have learned to knit, I mean to make a great many stockings for the poor. We have a great many poor people in our neighbourhood; and it will be a great pleasure to keep them warm in the winter."

What a delightful prospect now opened out before Kitty Bulwer! And it became much more delightful when her parents

gave their assent to it, and it was settled that Kitty Bulwer should live as knitting-teacher to Mary. "All the waiting I want," said the lady to Kitty's mother, "can be easily done by your daughter; and if she reads to my child, and they knit together, and she conduces to her happiness, that is all I desire." And thus Kitty became installed for a while as an inmate of the lady's family; and when the lady and her daughter went to their own home, they took Kitty with them. She travelled in the very same carriage which she had been the means of saving from destruction on the precipitous hill near her father's cottage!

As weeks passed on, Kitty Bulwer became more and more acceptable to Mary, so that she could not bear to part with her; and when a situation became vacant, which suited farmer Bulwer, the lady gave it to

him, and he came and lived near his daughter in something like his former house again.

Years rolled on, and Kitty Bulwer had grown into a strong woman, when one day, as she was returning to her home, in the frosty twilight of Christmas, she was accosted by a gipsy-like-looking woman, with a wretched-looking child upon her back, and two more following her, one holding her by her ragged petticoat, and another carrying a bag intended for potatoes, or meal, or any scraps that could be got. Kitty was very respectably, though not finely, dressed, and the woman took her for one of the ladies of the house. "Oh, listen to me, my lady," said she, "and give me something to cover my feet; they're frost-bitten, and I feel as though my toes would drop off; and the children

are as bad. My husband is dead,—ay, he died in a ditch, of cold, not a month ago; and I'll soon go too."

"If you'll go up to the yard, I'll relieve you," said Kitty. "I'll go on and get something warm for you." And, hastening home, she took out the last pair of socks she had knitted, and got some warm soup from the kitchen. The woman was at the door, and when she and the children had devoured the soup, she stretched out her hand eagerly for the stockings; but she no sooner saw them plainly than she fixed her eyes on Kitty, and then, with a loud scream, she fell fainting on the ground. When the strange woman came to herself, she thrust out her hand violently, as though she were pushing some one from her, and cried out Kitty's name several times.

Who or what could she be, and whence had she come?

Kitty ventured close to her, while one of the servants threw a light strong upon her face; and in a moment the truth was revealed. The wretched woman was Nancy Sawyer! It was too much, even for her, to receive the stockings from one whom she had so wronged in former times; —to be given a pair by the very one whose work of the very same kind she had maliciously destroyed was more than she could bear.

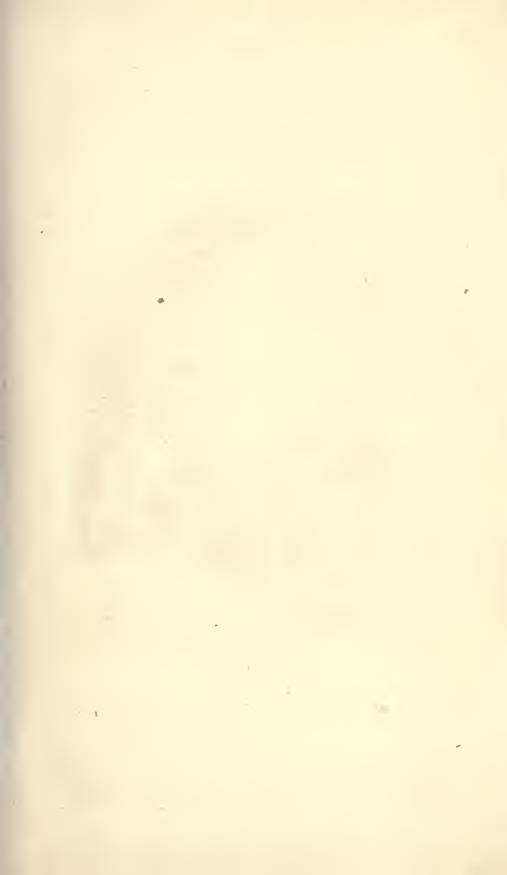
Kitty begged everybody to withdraw, and leave the strange woman with her; and in the course of a short time she heard from her her whole story. She confessed to having cut the stockings; and ever since she had done that malicious deed she had enjoyed no peace. Things seemed always to go wrong with her, and her whole history was a melancholy one. In spite of her father's disapproval, Nancy

had married a travelling tinker and knife-grinder, and had wandered about, half starved, over the country, for many a long day.

A comfortable place was provided, by the lady's direction, for the poor creature, and Kitty Bulwer intended on the following morning to give her some substantial help; but when morning came the vagrant was not to be found. She had gone away before the early dawn. No more was ever heard of Nancy Sawyer; but a person answering her description was convicted of theft and sentenced to severe punishment; but Kitty Bulwer lived on, honoured and respected, finding out, more and more every day, how *all things work together* for good to them who love God.

THE ONE MOSS-ROSE.






One Moss Rose.—Frontispiece.



"Pray don't cut it; 'tis our only rose." p. 73.

THE
ONE MOSS-ROSE.

 LEONARD DOBBIN occupied a humble cottage; but, although humble, it was always kept neat and clean, and was a pattern of every thing that a poor man's dwelling should be. The white-washed walls, the smoothly raked gravel walk, and the sanded floor, were so many evidences that Leonard was a careful and a thrifty man; and while some of his poorer neighbours laughed, and asked where was the use of being so precise, they could not help respecting Dobbin, nevertheless.

The great, and, indeed, almost the *only*,

pleasure upon which the labourer allowed himself to spend any time, was the little flower-garden in front of the house. This garden was Dobbin's pride; and the pride of the garden was a moss-rose-tree, which was the peculiar treasure of the labourer's little, crippled son, who watched it from the window, and, whenever he was well enough, crept out to water it and pick off any stray worm which had ventured to climb up upon its rich brown leaves. No mother ever watched her little infant with more eager eyes than Jacob Dobbin did his favourite rose; and no doubt he thought all the more of it because he had so few pleasures in life. Jacob Dobbin had no fine toys; he could not take any long walks, nor could he play at any games: therefore his rose-tree was all the more precious. In fact, in his estimation there was nothing to compare with it in the wide world.

There was a great difference between poor Jacob's lot and that of the son of Leonard Dobbin's landlord. James Courtenay had plenty of toys. He had also a pony, and a servant to attend him when he rode out. When summer came, he used often to go out sailing in his yacht; and there was scarce any thing on which he set his heart which he was not able to get.

With all these pleasures, James Courtenay was not, however, so happy as poor Jacob Dobbin. Jacob, though crippled, was contented: his few pleasures were thoroughly enjoyed, and "a contented mind is a continual feast;" whereas James was spoiled by the abundance of good things at his command. He was like the full man that loatheth the honey-comb; and he often caused no little trouble to his friends, and, indeed, to himself also, by the evil tempers he displayed.

Many a time did James Courtenay's old nurse, who was a God-fearing woman, point out to him that the world was not made for him alone; that there were many others to be considered as well as himself; and that although God had given him many things, still he was not of a bit more importance in His sight than others who had not so much. To all this he would never have listened from any one else; but old Aggie had reared him, and whenever he was laid by with any illness, or was in any particular trouble, she was the one to whom he always fled.

"God sometimes teaches people very bitter lessons," said old Aggie, one day, when James Courtenay had been speaking contemptuously to one of the servants; "and take care, Master James, lest you soon have to learn one."

Jacob Dobbin had been for some time

worse than usual,—his cough was more severe, and his lame leg more painful,—when his father and he held a long conversation by the side of their scanty fire.

Leonard had made the tea in the old black pot with the broken spout, and Jacob lay on his little bench, close up to the table.

“Father,” said Jacob, “I saw Master James ride by on his gray pony to-day, and just then my leg gave me a sore pinch, and I thought, How strange it is that there should be such a difference between people! He’s almost always galloping about, and I’m almost always in bed.”

“Poor folks,” answered Jacob’s father, “are not always so badly off as they suppose. Little things make them happy, and little things often make great folks unhappy. And let us remember, Jacob,

that, whatever may be our lot in life, we all have an opportunity of pleasing God, and so obtaining the great reward which of his mercy, and for Christ's sake, he will give to all those who please him by patient continuance in well-doing. The squire cannot please God any more than you."

"Oh," said Jacob, "the squire can spend more money than I can. He can give to the poor, and do a great many things that I cannot. All I can do is to lie still on my bed, and keep myself from using bad words when the pain is very bad."

"Exactly so, my son," answered Leonard Dobbin; "but remember that patience is of great price in the sight of God; and he is very often glorified in the sufferings of his people."

"The way I should like to glorify God,"

said Jacob, "would be by going about doing good, and letting people see me do it, so that I could glorify Him before them, and not in my dull little corner here."

"Ah, Jacob, my son," replied old Leonard Dobbin, "you may glorify God more than you suppose up in your dull little corner. What should you think of glorifying Him before angels and evil spirits?"

"Ah, that would be glorious indeed!" cried Jacob.

"Spirits, good and bad, are ever around us," said his father, "and they are watching us; and how much must God be glorified before them when they see his grace able to make a sufferer patient and gentle, and when they know that he is bearing every thing for Christ's sake! When a Christian is injured, and avenges not himself; when he is evil-spoken of, and

answers not again; when he is provoked, yet continues long-suffering: then the spirits, good and bad, witness these things, and they must glorify the grace of God."

That night Jacob Dobbin seemed to have quite a new light thrown upon his life. "Perhaps," said he to himself, as he lay upon the little bench, "I'm afflicted in order that I may glorify God. I suppose he is glorified by his people bearing different kinds of pain. . Perhaps some other boy is glorifying him with a crippled hand, while I am doing it with my poor crippled leg; but I should like to be able even to bear persecution from man for Christ's sake, like the martyrs in father's old book. As I have strength to bear such dreadful pain in my poor leg, I dare say I might bear a great deal of suffering of other kinds."

The spring, with its sunshine and showers, passed away, and the beautiful summer came, and Jacob Dobbin was able to sit at the cottage-door, breathing the pure country air, and admiring what was to him the loveliest object in nature,—namely, one rich, swelling bud upon his moss-rose-tree. There was but one bud this year upon the tree,—the frosts and keen spring winds had nipped all the rest; and this one was now bursting into beauty, and it was doubly dear to Jacob, because it was left alone.

Jacob passed much of his time at the cottage-door, dividing his admiration between the one moss-rose and the beautiful white fleecy clouds which used to sail in majestic grandeur over his head; and often he used to be day-dreaming for hours, about the white robes of all who suffered for their Lord.

While thus engaged, one day, Master James Courtenay came running along, and his eyes fell upon Jacob's rose.

"Halloo!" cried he, with delight; "a moss-rose! Ha! ha!—the gardener said we had not even one blown in our garden; but here's a rare beauty!" And in a moment he had bounded over the little garden-gate, and stood beside the rose-bush. In another instant his knife was out of his pocket, and his hand was approaching the tree.

"Stop! stop!" cried Jacob Dobbin; "pray don't cut it:—'tis our only rose. I've watched it I don't know how long, and 'tisn't quite come out yet." And Jacob made an effort to get from his seat to the tree; but, before the poor little cripple could well rise from his seat, the young squire's knife was through the stem, and, with a loud laugh, he jumped

over the garden-fence, and was soon lost to sight!

The excitement of this scene had a lamentable effect upon poor Jacob Dobbin. When he found his one moss-rose gone, he burst into a violent fit of sobbing; and a neighbour, passing that way a little time after, found him lying senseless upon the ground. The neighbouring doctor was sent for, and he gave it as his opinion that Jacob could never get over this attack. He was completely prostrated. The excitement was too much for him.

“Had it been an ordinary case,” said the doctor, “I should not have apprehended a fatal result; but, under present circumstances, I fear the very worst. Poor Jacob has not strength to bear up against this loss of blood.”

For many days Jacob Dobbin lay in

a darkened room, and many were the thoughts of the other world which came into his mind; among them were some connected with the holy martyrs.

“Father,” said he, one day, “I have been learning a lesson about the martyrs. I see now how unfit I was to be tried as they were. If I could not bear the loss of one moss-rose patiently for Christ’s sake, how could I have borne fire and prison, and such-like things?”

“Ah, Jacob,” said the old man, “’tis by little common trials, such as we meet with every day, that, by God’s grace, such a spirit is reared within us as was in the hearts of the martyrs of olden time. Tell me, can you forgive James Courtenay?”

“The blessed Jesus forgave his persecutors,” whispered Jacob, faintly; “and the martyrs prayed for those who tor-

mented them: in this, at least, I may be like them. Father, I do forgive him. And, father," said Jacob, as he opened his eyes after an interval of a few minutes' rest, "get your spade, and dig up the tree, and take it to him, with my forgiveness. Don't wait till I'm dead, father; I should not mind parting with it then. But I love the tree, and I wish to give it to him now; and if you dig up a very large clod of earth with it, he can have it planted in his garden at once; and——"

But poor Jacob could say no more. He fell back quite exhausted, and he never returned to the subject again; for he gradually sank, and, in a day or two afterwards, died.

When old Leonard Dobbin appeared at the squire's house with his wheelbarrow

containing the rose-tree and its clod of earth, there was no small stir among the servants. Some said it was impudence in him to come troubling the family about his trumpery rose, bringing the tree, as if he wanted to lay Jacob Dobbin's blood at their young master's door; others shook their heads, and said it was a bad business, and that that tree was an ugly present, and one that they should not care to have; and as to old Aggie, she held her tongue, but prayed that the child she had reared so anxiously might yet become changed, and grow up an altered man.

Old Leonard could not get audience of the squire or of Master James; but the gardener, who was in the servants' hall when he arrived with his rose, told him to wheel it along, and he would plant it in Master James's garden, and look after

it until it bloomed again; and there the rose-bush finally took up its abode.

Meanwhile, young Courtenay behaved worse and worse. He respected no one's property if he fancied it himself; and all the tenants and domestics were afraid of imposing any check upon his evil ways. He was not, however, without some stings of conscience. He knew that Jacob Dobbin was dead; he had even seen his newly-made grave in the church-yard on Sunday; and he could not blot from his memory the distress of poor Jacob when last he saw him alive. Moreover, some of the whisperings of the neighbourhood reached his ears; and all these things made him feel far from comfortable.

As day after day passed by, James Courtenay felt more and more miserable. A settled sadness took possession of his mind, varied by fits of restlessness and

passion, and he felt that there was something hanging over him, although he could not exactly tell what. It was evident, from the whispers which had reached his ears, that there had been some dreadful circumstances connected with poor Jacob Dobbin's death; but he feared to inquire: and so day after day passed in wretchedness, and there seemed little chance of matters getting any better.

At length a change came in a very unexpected way. As James Courtenay was riding along, one day, he saw a pair of bantam fowls picking up the corn about a stack in one of the tenants' yards. The bantams were very handsome, and he felt a great desire to possess them. So he dismounted, and, seeing the farmer's son hard by, he asked him for how much he would sell the fowls.

"They're not for sale," said the boy.

"They belong to my young sister, and she wouldn't sell those bantams for any money: there isn't a cock to match that one in all the country round."

"I'll give five dollars for them," said James Courtenay.

"Ten wouldn't buy 'em," answered Jim Meyers.

"Then I'll take them, and no thanks," said he; and, so saying, he flung Jim Meyers a five-dollar note, and began to drive the bantams into a corner of the yard.

"I say," cried Jim, "leave off hunting those bantams, or I must call my father."

"Your father!" cried young Courtenay; "and pray who's your father? You're a pretty fellow to talk about a father. Take care I don't bring my father to you." And, having said this, he made a dart at the

cock bantam, which he had by this time driven into a corner.

"Look here," said Jim, doubling his fists. "You did a bad job by Jacob Dobbin. You were the death of him; and I won't have you the death of my little sister, by, may-be, her fretting herself to death about these birds. So you look out; and if you touch one of these birds, come what will of it, I'll touch you."

"Who ever said I did Jacob Dobbin any harm?" asked James Courtenay, his face as pale as ashes. "I never laid a finger upon the brat."

"Brat or no brat," answered Jim Meyers, "you were the death of him. You made him sick; and I say you murdered him."

This was too much for James Courtenay to bear; so, without more ado, he flew upon Jim Meyers, intending to pommel

him well; but Jim was not to be so easily pommelled. He stood upon his guard, and soon dealt his antagonist such a blow between the eyes that he had no more power to fight.

“Vengeance! vengeance!” cried the angry youth. “I’ll make you pay dearly for this.” And, slinking away, he got upon his pony and rode rapidly home.

It may be easily imagined that on the young squire’s arrival at home in so melancholy a plight the whole place was in terrible confusion. Servants ran hither and thither; old Aggie went off for some ice, and some one ran for the doctor, and the house was turned upside-down.

In the midst of all this, James Courtenay’s father came home; and great indeed was his rage when he heard that his son had received this treatment from the hands of a son of one of his own tenants;

and his rage became greater and greater as the beaten boy gave a very untrue account of what had occurred.

“I was admiring a bantam of Meyers’s,” said he to his father, “and his son flew upon me like a tiger, and hit me between the eyes.”

Squire Courtenay determined to move in the matter at once: so he sent a servant to summon the Meyers, both father and son.

“I’ll make Meyers pay dearly for this,” said the squire. “His lease is out in a few months, and I shall not renew it; and, besides, I’ll prosecute his son.”

All this delighted young Courtenay, and every minute seemed to him to be an hour until the arrival of the two Meyers, upon whom ample vengeance was to be wreaked; and the pain of his eyes seemed as nothing, so sweet was the prospect of revenge.

In the course of an hour they arrived, and, with much fear and trembling, were shown into their landlord's presence.

"Meyers!" cried the squire, in great wrath, "your lease will soon expire, and will not be renewed. And as to that young scoundrel, your son, I'll have him before the court, and I'll see whether I can't make him pay for such tricks as these."

"What have I done," asked old Meyers, "to deserve being turned adrift? If your honour will hear the whole of the story about this business, I don't believe you'll turn me out on the world, after being on your land nigh forty years."

"Know!" I know enough about it. Your son dared to lift a hand against mine, and—and I'll have no tenant on my estate that will venture upon such an outrage as that. It was a great favour to

you for my son to admire your bantams, or any thing on your farm, without his being subjected to such an assault."

"I don't want to excuse my boy," said old Meyers, "for what he did to the young squire,—and right sorry I am that he ever lifted a hand to him; but, begging your honour's pardon, the young squire provoked him to it, and he did a great deal more than just admire my little girl's bantams. Come, Jim, speak up, and tell the squire all about it."

"Ay, speak up, and excuse yourself, you young rascal, if you can," said the angry squire; "and, if you can't, you'll soon find your way into the inside of a prison for this."

"I will speak up, then, your honour, since you wish it," said Jim Meyers; "and I'll tell the whole truth of how this came about." And then he told the whole

story of the young squire having wanted to buy the bantams, and, on his not being permitted to do so, of his endeavouring to take them by force. "And when I wouldn't let him carry away my sister's birds, he flew on me like a game-cock, and, in self-defence, I struck him as I did."

"You said I murdered Jacob Dobbin," interrupted James Courtenay.

"Yes, I did," answered Jim Meyers; "and all the country says the same, and I only say what every one else says. Ask anybody within five miles of this, and, if they're not afraid to speak up, they'll tell just the same tale that I do."

"Murdered Jacob Dobbin!" ejaculated the squire, in astonishment; "I don't believe my son ever lifted a hand to him:—you mean the crippled boy that died some time ago?"

"Yes; he means him," said Jim Mey-

ers's father. "And 'tis true what the lad says, that folks for five miles round lay his death at the young squire's door, and say that a day will come when his blood will be required of him."

"Why, what happened?" asked the squire, beginning almost to tremble in his chair; for he knew that his son had a very violent temper and was of a very arbitrary disposition; and he felt, moreover, within the depths of his own heart, that he had not checked him as he should. "What is the whole truth about this matter?"

"Come, speak up, Jim," said old Meyers. "You were poor Jacob's friend, and you know most about it." The squire also added a word, encouraging the lad, who, thus emboldened, took courage, and gave the squire the whole history of poor Jacob Dobbin's one moss-rose. He told

him of the cripple's love for the plant, and how its one and only blossom had been rudely snatched away by the young squire, and how poor Jacob suffered, and finally died.

"And if your honour wants to know what became of the tree, you'll find it planted in the young squire's garden, there," added Jim, "and the gardener will tell you how it came there."

The reader will easily guess what must have been the young squire's feelings as he heard the whole of this tale. Several times did he endeavour to make his escape, under the plea that he was in great pain from his face, and once or twice he pretended to faint away; but his father, who, though proud and irreligious, was disposed to justice, determined that he should remain until the whole matter was searched out.

When Jim Meyers's story was ended, the squire bade him go into the hall, and his father also, while old Dobbin was sent for; and as to James, his son, he told him to go up to his bedroom, and not come down until he was called.

Poor old Leonard Dobbin was just as much frightened as Jim Meyers and his father had been at the summons to attend the squire. He had a clear conscience, however; he felt that he had not wronged the squire in any thing; and so, washing himself and putting on his best Sunday clothes, he made his way up as quickly as he could.

"Leonard Dobbin," said the squire, "I charge you, upon pain of my worst displeasure, to tell me all you know about this story of your late son's moss-rose-tree. You need not be afraid to tell me all. Your only cause for fear will be the

holding back from me any thing connected with the matter."

Leonard went through the whole story just as Jim Meyers had done: only he added many little matters which made the young squire's conduct appear even in a still worse light than it had done. He was able to add all about his poor crippled boy's forgiveness of the one who had wronged him, and how he had himself wheeled the rose-tree up to the squire's door, and how it was now to be found in the young squire's garden.

"And, if I may make so bold as to speak," continued old Leonard, "nothing but true religion, and the love of Christ, and the power of God's Spirit in the heart, will ever make us heartily forgive our enemies, and not only forgive them, but render to them good for evil."

When Leonard Dobbin arrived, James

Courtenay had been sent for, and had been obliged, with crimsoned cheeks, to listen to this story of the poor crippled boy's feelings. And now he would have given all the roses in the world, if they were his, to restore poor Jacob to life, or if he had never meddled with his flowers; but what had been done could not be undone, and no one could awake the poor boy from his sleep in the silent grave.

"Leonard Dobbin," said the squire, after he had sat for some time moodily, with his face buried in his hands, "this is the worst blow I have ever had in life. I would give thousands of hard money, down on that table, this very moment, that my boy had never touched your boy's rose. But what is done cannot be undone. Go home, and when I've thought upon this matter I'll see you again."

"Meyers," said the squire, turning to

the other tenant, "I was hasty in saying a little while ago that I'd turn you out of your farm. You need have no fear about the matter. Instead of turning you out, I'll give you a lease of it. I hope you won't talk more than can be helped about this terrible business."

The two men stood talking together for a while before they left the grounds; and old Leonard could not help wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his rough coat, as he said to Meyers,—

"Ah, neighbour, 'tis sore work having a child without the fear of God before his eyes. I'd rather be the father of poor Jacob in his grave, than of the young squire up yonder."

Bitter, indeed, were Squire Courtenay's feelings and reflections when the two men had left, and, his son having been ordered off to his chamber, he found himself once

more alone. The dusk of the evening came on; but he did not seem to care for food, and, in truth, his melancholy thoughts had taken all appetite away. At last he went to the window, which looked out over a fine park and a long tract of valuable property, and he began to think, "What good will all these farms do this boy, if the tenants upon them only hate him and curse him? Perhaps, with all this property, he may come to some bad end, and bring disgrace upon his family and himself."

And then the squire's own heart began to smite him, and he thought, "Am not I to blame for not having looked more closely after him, and for not having corrected him whenever he went wrong? I must do something at once. I must send him away from this place, where almost every one lets him do as he likes,

until he learns how to control himself, at least so far as not to do injustice to others."

Meanwhile, the young squire's punishment had begun. When left to the solitude of his room, after having heard the whole of Leonard Dobbin's account of poor Jacob's death, a great horror took possession of his mind. Many were the efforts the young lad made to shake off the gloomy thoughts which came trooping into his mind; but every thought seemed to have a hundred hooks by which it clung to the memory, so that, once in the mind, it could not be got rid of again. At length the young squire lay down upon his bed, trembling as if he had the ague, and realizing how true are the words, that "our sin will find us out," and that "the way of transgressors is hard."

At last, to his great relief, the handle

of his door was turned, and old Aggie made her appearance.

“Oh, Aggie, Aggie,” cried James Courtenay, “such horrid thoughts as I have, and such dreadful things as I see! Jim Meyers said I murdered Jacob Dobbin; and I believe I did, though I didn’t intend to do it. I wish I had never gone that way! I wish I had never seen that rose! I wish there had never been a rose in the world! Oh, dear! My head, my poor head!” And James Courtenay put his two hands upon the two sides of his head, as though he wanted to keep it from splitting asunder.

Aggie saw that there was no use in speaking while James Courtenay’s head was in such a state as this. All she could do was to help him into bed, and give him something to soothe him. Food he put from him; but drink he asked for

again and again. Water was all he craved; but Aggie was at last obliged to give over, and say she was afraid to give him any more.

James Courtenay's state was speedily made known to his father; and in a few minutes from old Aggie's conversation with him, a messenger was on his way to hasten the family physician. The latter soon arrived, and, after a few minutes, pronounced him to have a brain-fever,—the end of which, of course, no man could foresee.

And a fearful fever indeed it was. Day after day passed in wild delirium. The burden of all the poor sufferer's cries and thoughts was that he was a murderer. He used to call himself Cain, and to try to tear the murderer's mark out of his forehead. Sometimes he rolled himself in the sheet, and thought that he was

dressed in a funeral cloak, attending Jacob Dobbin's funeral, and all the while knowing that he had caused his death. At times, the wretched patient would attempt to spring from his bed; and now he fancied that he was being whipped with the thorny branches of rose-trees; and now that he was being put in prison for stealing from a poor man's garden. At one time he thought all the tenants on the estate were driving him from it with hounds, while he was fleeing from them on his gray pony; and the next moment his pony was entangled hopelessly in the branches of little Dobbin's rose-tree, and the dogs were on him, and the huntsmen were hallooing, and he was about to be devoured. All these were the terrible ravings of fever; and very awful it was to see the youth, with his hair all shaved off and wet cloths over

his head, tossing his arms about, and endeavouring at times to burst from his nurses and leap out upon the floor. The one prevailing thought in all the sick boy's ravings was Jacob Dobbin's rose-bush. Jacob, or his rose-bush, in some form or other, occupied a prominent part in every vision.

Ah! how terrible are the lashings of conscience! How terrible are the effects of sin! For what a small gratification did this unhappy youth bring so much misery upon himself! And is it not often thus? The apostle says, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" And what fruit of pleasure had James Courtenay from his plunder of Jacob Dobbin's rose? Where was that rose? It was long since faded; its leaves were mingled with the dung-heap upon which it had been thrown; and

for the sake of the transient enjoyment of possessing that flower only a few days before an abundance of them would have made their appearance in his own garden, he had brought upon himself all this woe. Poor, very poor indeed, are the pleasures of sin; and when they have been enjoyed, they are like the ashes of a fire that has burned out. Compare James Courtenay's present troubles,—his torture of mind, his pain of body, his risk of losing his life,—and the almost momentary enjoyment which he had in plundering his poor neighbour of his moss-rose; and see how Satan cheats in his promises of enjoyment from sin.

Let not Satan persuade us that there is any profit in sin. Momentary pleasure there may indeed be, but it is soon gone, and then come sorrow and distress. Sin is a sweet cup with bitter dregs, and he

who drinks the little sweet that there is, must drink the dregs also. Moments of sin may cause years of sorrow.

For many days James Courtenay hung between life and death; night and day he was watched by skilful physicians, but they could do very little more than let the disease run its course. At length a change for the better appeared; the unhappy boy fell into a long sleep, and when he opened his eyes the violence of his disease had abated. But it had left him in a truly pitiable state. It was a sad sight to see the once robust boy now very little better than a skeleton; to hear the once loud voice now no stronger than a mere whisper; and instead of the mass of brown curly hair, to behold the shaven head.

But all this Squire Courtenay did not

so much mind. His son's life was spared, and he made no doubt but that care and attention would soon restore him, and the curly locks would grow as luxuriantly as they did before. Old Aggie, too, was full of joy that the boy she had nursed so tenderly, and for whom she had had such long anxiety, was not cut off in the midst of his sins. He might perhaps have his heart changed and grow up to be a good man. And what an opportunity was this for trying to impress his mind! Old Aggie was determined that it should not be lost, and she hoped that the young squire might yet prove a blessing, and not a curse, to those among whom he lived.

There were not wanting many among Squire Courtenay's tenants who would have been very glad if the young squire had never recovered. They had tasted a little of his bad character, and they feared

that if he grew up to inherit the property he would prove a tyrannical landlord to them. But among these was not to be reckoned old Leonard Dobbin. True, he had suffered terribly—indeed, more than any one else—from James Courtenay's evil ways; but he did not on that account wish him dead:—far from it. It was old Leonard's great fear lest the young squire should die in his sins; and no one asked more earnestly about the invalid than this good old man.

As it was necessary that the sick boy should be kept as quiet as possible, no one went near his room except old Aggie and those whose services could not be dispensed with. Old Aggie alone was allowed to talk to him; and a long time would have elapsed before she could venture to speak of the circumstances which had brought about this dreadful

illness, had not the young squire himself entered on the subject.

"Aggie," said James Courtenay, "you often think I am asleep when I am not; and you think I scarcely have my mind about me yet, when I lie so long quite still, looking away into the blue sky. But I am thinking; I am always thinking; and very often I am praying,—asking forgiveness for the past, and hoping that I shall be changed for the future."

"But we can't do much by hoping," said Aggie, "and we can't do any thing by ourselves."

"I mean to do more than *hope*," said James Courtenay: "I mean to *try*."

"And you mean, I trust, to ask God's Spirit to help you?" said Aggie.

"Yes, every day," said James. "He helped Jacob, and he'll help me; and I hope to be yet where Jacob is now."

“Ay, He helps the poor,” said Aggie, “and He’ll help the rich. Jacob had his trials, and you’ll have your’s; and perhaps your’s are the hardest, so far as going to heaven is concerned; for the rich have their temptations as well as the poor. Our Lord says that ‘’tis hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.’”

For many days James Courtenay thus pondered and prayed, with Aggie as his chief companion and instructor; and at length he was able to leave his room. But he was a different James Courtenay from the one who had entered that room some months before. The young squire was still pale and thin; but this was not the chief change observable in him: he was silent and thoughtful in his manner, and gentle and kind to every one around. The loud voice, which once rang so im-

periously and impatiently through the corridors, was now heard no more. The hand was not lifted to strike; and often gratitude was expressed for any attention that was shown. The people in the house looked at each other, and wondered: they could scarcely hope that such a change would last; and when he returned to full health and strength they quite expected the old state of things to return again. But they were mistaken. The change in James Courtenay was a real one. It was founded on something more substantial than the transient feelings of illness: he was changed *in his heart*.

And very soon he learned, by experience, the happiness which true religion brings with it. Instead of being served unwillingly by those around him, every one was anxious to please him; and he

almost wondered at times whether these could be the same people with whom he had lived all his life. They now, indeed, gave a service of love; and a service of love is as different from a service of mere duty as day is from night.

Wherever the young squire had most displayed his passionate temper, there he made a point of going, for the sake of speaking kindly, and undoing, so far as he could, the evil he had already done. He kept ever in mind that there was not only a Saviour by whom alone he could be saved from his sins, but also that there was a road on which it was necessary to walk,—a road which ran through daily life; a road on which loving deeds were to be done and loving words spoken,—the road of obedience to the will of Christ. James Courtenay well knew that obedience could not save him; but he well

knew also that obedience was required from such as were saved by sovereign grace.

Altered as James Courtenay undoubtedly was, and earnest as he felt to behave differently, he could not shake off the sad memory of the past. His mind was continually brooding upon poor little Dobbin's death, and upon the share which he had in it. For now he knew all the truth. He had seen old Leonard, and sat with him for many hours; and, at his earnest request, the old man had told him all the truth.

"Keep nothing back from me," said the young squire, as he sat by old Leonard's humble fireplace, with his face covered with his hands; and over and over again had the old man to repeat the same story, and to call to mind every word that his departed son had said.

“What shall I do, Leonard, to show my sorrow?” asked James Courtenay, one day. “Will you go and live in a new house, if I get my father to build one for you?”

“Thank you,” said Leonard. “It was here that Jacob was born and died, and this will do for me well enough as long as I am here: and it don’t distress me much about its being a poor kind of a place; for I’m only here for a while, and I’ve a better house up yonder.”

“Ay,” said James Courtenay, “and Jacob is up yonder; but I fear, with all my striving, I shall never get there; and what good will all my fine property do me, if at the end of all I am shut out of the happy land?”

“You need not be shut out,” said old Dobbin; and he pulled down the worn Bible from the shelf; “no, no; you need

not be shut out. Here is the verse that secured poor Jacob's inheritance, and here is the verse that, by God's grace, secures mine, and it may secure your's too;" and the old man read out the passage in 1 John i. 7:—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all* sin." "All, all!" cried old Dobbin, his voice rising as he proceeded, for his heart was on fire; "from murder, theft, lying, stealing,—every thing, every thing! Oh, what sinners are now in glory!—Sinners no longer, but saints, washed in the precious blood! Oh, how many are there now on earth waiting to be taken away and be forever with the Lord! I am bad, my heart is full of sin in itself; but the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin;—and whatever you have done may be all washed out. Only cast yourself, body and soul, on Christ."

"But how could I ever meet Jacob in

heaven?" murmured the young squire from between his hands, in which he had buried his face. "When I see him, must not I feel that I murdered him? Ay, I was the cause of his misery and death,—all for the sake of one fading, worthless flower!"

"Don't call it worthless. 'Twas God's creature, and very beautiful while it lasted; and you can't call a thing worthless that gave a human being as much pleasure as that rose gave my poor child; but, whatever it was, it will make no hindrance to Jacob's meeting you in heaven,—ay, and welcoming you there, too. If you reach that happy place, I'll be bound Jacob will meet you with a smile, and will welcome you with a song into the happy land."

"Well, 'tis hard to understand," said James Courtenay.

"Yes, yes, hard to our poor natures,

but easy to those who are quite like their Saviour, as Jacob is now. When He was upon earth, he taught his followers to forgive and to love their enemies, and to do good to such as used them despitefully; and we may be sure that, now they are with him and are made like him, they carry out all he would have them do, and they are all he would have them be. I don't believe that there is one in heaven that would be more glad to see you than my poor boy,—if I may call him so, seeing he's now in glory."

Many were the conversations of this kind which passed between old Leonard and the young squire; and gradually the latter obtained more peace in his mind. True, he could never divest himself of the awful thought that he had been the immediate cause of his humble neighbour's death; but he dwelt very much upon that

word "all," and Aggie repeated old Leonard's lessons, and by degrees he was able to lay even his greatest trouble upon his Saviour.

But all that James Courtenay had gone through had told fearfully upon his health. His friends, who watched him anxiously, saw that as weeks rolled on he gained no strength, and at length it was evident that he was in a consumption, in a very rapid form. At his own earnest request, he was told what his condition really was; and, when he heard it, not a tear started in his eye, not a murmur escaped his lips. One request, and one only, did he prefer; and that was, that Leonard Dobbin should be admitted to his room as often as he wished to see him. And with Leonard came the old worn Bible. The good old labourer was afraid, with his rough hands, to touch the richly bound and gilt volume that was

brought up from the library; but he knew every page in his own well-thumbed old book, and in that he read, and from that he discoursed.

The minister came now and then; but when he heard of what service old Leonard had been to the young man, he said that God could use the uneducated as well as the learned, and he rejoiced that by any instrumentality, however humble, God had in grace and mercy wrought upon the soul of this wayward boy.

When the end of his life was evidently very near, he said to his father,—

“You remember that grandmother left me some money when she died: give Leonard Dobbin as much every year as will support him; and give him my gray pony, that he may be carried about, for he is getting too old to work: and”—and it seemed as though the dying boy had to

summon up all his strength to say it—
“bury me, not in our own marble vault,
but by Jacob Dobbin’s grave; and put up
a monument in our church to Jacob, and
cut upon it a broken rose; and let a rose-
bush be planted close to where poor Jacob
lies——”

He could say no more, and it was a
long time before he spoke again; when he
did, it was evident that he was very near
the other world. With the little strength
at his command, the dying boy muttered
old Leonard’s name, and in a moment the
aged Christian, with his Bible in his hand,
stood by the bedside.

Opening his Bible at the well-known
place, he read aloud, “The blood of
Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all
sin.”

“*All, all,*” whispered the dying boy.

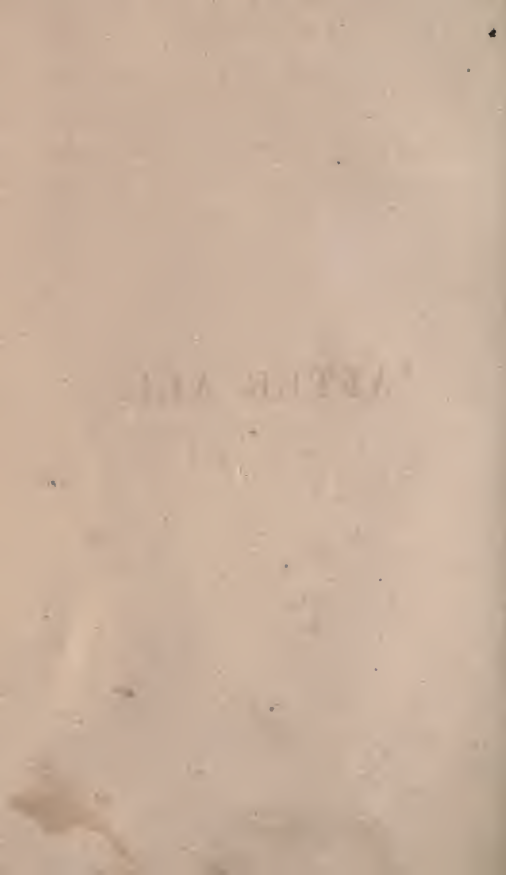
“*All, all,*” responded the old man.

"*All, all,*" was faintly echoed. And directly James Courtenay had departed to realize the truth of the words, "that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin."

Next to the chief mourners at the funeral walked old Leonard Dobbin; and close by the poor crippled Jacob's grave they buried James Courtenay,—so close that the two graves seemed almost one. And when a little time had elapsed, the squire had a handsome tomb placed over his son, which covered in the remains of poor Jacob too, and at the head of it was planted the moss-rose-tree! Roses enough does that rose-bush bear, but no one pulls them; and now the old Hall is without an heir, and the squire without a son. But there is good hope that the squire thinks of a better world, and that he would rather have his boy safe in heaven


than here amid the temptations of riches again.

Oh, what a wonder that there is mercy for the greatest sinners! But, oh, what misery comes of sin! "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."



“AFTER ALL.”

AFTER ALL!



O you are in great trouble still, John?" said an old minister to a hard-looking, worn-out man of about forty-five years of age, who sat propped up with pillows by the fireside.

"Ay! you just say it, sir," answered John Harris; "in great trouble still; and I'm afraid that 'still' will always be 'still,' and will never come to an end."

"Well, I'm not altogether so much afraid as you are," answered the old gentleman. "I've seen such wonderful things done for sinners in my day—ay, John

Harris, and such wonderful things done for myself—that I'm very hopeful, and I cannot but think that something wonderful will yet be done for you."

"Well, if any thing is, it will be wonderful, that's all I can say; and may it be done soon; for I feel a sinking here," said Harris, spreading his five fingers wide open over his chest, "and I know what that means. Every one of these sinkings and shiverings is just one step nearer the church-yard."

"Come, now," said the old minister: "to be willing is half the battle."

"Yes, I am willing; but the old sins keep fighting me. The number of them, and the variety, and what I call 'the deep-down depth of them,' I can't get them out of the way: they are too many for me. I don't think God ever meant his promises or his offers for the like of me.

If you had come to me when I was about sixteen, and hadn't such an awful load of sin upon me as I have now, I might have been the better for your visit; but there is now a terrible past,—a past soaked in sin," said John Harris, almost fiercely. "I see it, I know it, I own it; and 'tis this past that is standing between me and God, between me and Christ, between me and heaven."

"Well, now," said the old minister, "you've made a clean breast of it at last. I could never make out exactly what was hindering you. You told me you believed that God was merciful, and you believed in the merits of the Redeemer, and you believed you needed the Saviour; and now, my friend, in spite of all this, I see: the past,—the past,—that is what prevents your having peace in the present and hope in the future. And now let me

assure you, John, it is the devil that is working the past so hard. It is a capital tool in his hand; it has two edges, and he can work it either way. By making men *careless* about it, he can ruin their soul; and mark me, John, by making them too *careful*, he can do it also. If he can keep a man thinking of his past sin and nothing else, then that past will keep him from the cross——”

“Ay, ay,—‘the cross!’ You’re always working round to that,” said the sick man. “But what I want to hear about is *God*,—mind you. ’Tis God that’s frightening me; and if you want to comfort me, tell me something about Him.”

“Well, John, I won’t be angry with you for telling me that I am sure to work round to the cross. I don’t see how any man with the Bible in his hand can do otherwise; and to-night we’ll be safe to

work round to it before we've done. But we will talk principally about God, if you like, and that with reference to this terrible 'past.' I had plenty of sins on my back when I was called upon to think about my soul, and the past was a trouble to me as well as to you."

"Ha!" said John Harris, eagerly; "and how did you get rid of it?"

"Why, I searched about a good deal in the Scriptures, sometimes getting a little comfort here, and sometimes a little there, until one day I opened the prophet Jeremiah, and there I came upon a verse, in which were two words, which did wonders for me."

"May-be they'll suit me," interrupted Harris. "What were they?"

"May-be they will," said his visitor, solemnly. "The two words were,—

'AFTER ALL.'

But I'll read them to you." And the minister turned to Jeremiah iii. 7. 'And I said, *after* she had done *all* these things, Turn thou unto me.' Now, John, I'm ready to talk to-night about that one bit of a verse; and I think that where there was comfort for me there is comfort for you too."

"Well," said John Harris, "I'm glad to get comfort anywhere: so I'm ready to hear all you have to say."

"Now, John, your great trouble is that you have been so bad. Yes, and you don't know *how* bad,—a great deal worse than you know, or are ever likely to know. God only knows how bad you have been. And a part of your comfort is that God knows how bad. There are many people who could not see much comfort in that thought; but the more I think of it the more it comforts me. For, when I take up such a verse as this, and

read the words 'all' and 'these,' and see that the word 'all' means a great number, and 'these' means the great number, *one* by *one*, with every thing about them, I say to myself, 'Now, then, there will be no going back of his word, owing to any mistake or any after-discovery. He has nothing to find out about me. He knows every thing, and He knew it all when He gave me the precious invitations in the gospel; and, therefore, if I accept his invitations and take Him at his word, I must be safe.' Now, John, if God were like man, He might be making a mistake, or be finding out things afterwards, which would make him change his mind. But He knows all your sins, and when and how and where you committed each of them; and He says, 'After you have done all these things, turn thou to me.' Sometimes Satan used to trouble me very much

by saying, 'Ah, but if you knew how bad you have been, and how bad you are, you never could hope for any mercy;' but I always have an answer for him. I say, 'The God I have to deal with knows all about it,—far more than you do; and if He passes his word to me after I have done all these things, He won't go back of it again.'"

"And a good answer, too," said John Harris. "I know that nothing good can come of hiding one's sins and not making a clean breast of them; for they'll be sure to come out afterwards. But where I'm partly troubled, is by the remembrance now and again of some particular sin, that I have not confessed, because it didn't come into my head; and if you hear Satan talking to you, so do I also; for he says, 'Ah! if you had died without confessing that sin, you must have been lost; and

there are a great many more that you can't remember; and so you can't confess them; and so you're pretty sure, with all your confessing and all your trying, to come to me at last.'"

"The devil's logic, no doubt," said the minister; "but you may meet him by saying, 'God knows all; and I confess myself guilty of all God knows; and I am willing to make confession of each particular sin as the Spirit of God brings it to my remembrance;' and unless Satan knows more than God knows, I don't see how he can work your ruin. We must just come as we are, with the '*all*' upon us; and come to God with good hope, too. Did not God say, 'after she had done all these things, Turn thou to me'?"

"I wish," said John Harris, after musing a while, "that I could undo the past."

"Well, John, that's a good wish in it-

self; but it is a vain one, for you cannot undo it. What's done is done, and cannot be undone; and let me tell you that this wish is not only vain, it may prove to be mischievous also. This wish of your's, which is good enough in itself, may be made the means of your keeping away from the One who can take away your sin; for as long as Satan can keep you just at wishing you had never done what has been done and cannot be undone, you are never likely to get on. As you can't come to God without the sin, why, come, man, with it, He says, 'After all!'

"It seems to me," said John Harris, "that God's knowing all, almost makes it sure that a man will be destroyed. How can He have any thing to do with him, when He knows so much about him?"

"What you make to be against a man," answered the old minister, "I make to be

for him; for I reason thus:—Here is a plain proof that God is not seeking our death. If He willed it, all is ready. ‘All these things!’ the list of our sins is in his hand; we have put ourselves within the power of his law. He has not to wait a single moment, until we do even one more sin. We have done enough, and more than enough, for our ruin already. One sin would ruin us, but we have committed hundreds of thousands; and still He says, ‘After all these things.’ All He has to do is to leave us to ourselves, or to reject us in our terror when we come to own that we are undone; but what He says is this:—‘I know all about you, but I do not want to slay you. Do not hold back because you are bowed down with shame, or because you are terrified at the appearance you know you must present before me. I have seen you already, I know all about

you,—a great deal more than you know yourself,—and now, “after all these things, Turn thou unto me.”” When we come to think of how much He knows about us, when He uses these words, isn’t it quite plain that He can’t be *seeking* our death; yes, and more than this,—that He gives us every opportunity of life; and that, if we will destroy ourselves, it is in spite of all his grace and kindness and love? Did you ever think, John, of *how easy it would be for God to destroy a sinner?*”

“To be sure I did; and that’s just another of the things that trouble me so much. Now my time is drawing near for appearing before Him, I feel He can make short work with me. ’Tis awful to feel that one can do nothing to help one’s self, but that one must lie down as weak as a child before that Mighty One. I have many a sad hour when I think of this.”

"I have you again," said the old minister; "surely this is another plain proof that God does not want to ruin you. For if He wanted to kill you, He had nothing to do but to leave you to yourself. He need never have said a word about receiving you or restoring you. He need have taken no trouble about you. He might have said, 'Leave that man to himself.'"

"And," interrupted the sick man, "when a man is left to himself, he'll go to ruin in spite of all he can do."

"Well, John, and therefore God has not left you to yourself. He comes and speaks to you, and says, 'After you have done all these things, Turn thou to me.' So far from leaving you to yourself, He sends you promises and offers, and fills the Holy Scriptures with his declarations of good will to sinners; and the very fact of

his not leaving you to yourself is a proof, I think, that He is not seeking your death. Yes, more than this, 'tis a proof that He is seeking your life. 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.'"

"Well," said John Harris, after a pause, "I don't think I have been left to myself, at any rate. What with Satan, or my poor conscience, I don't know which it is, always reminding me how bad I am, and that I *cannot* be saved; and, then, texts turning up here and there, telling me I *can* be saved, I am not left alone, at any rate; and may-be there is some comfort to be had even out of this."

"To be sure there is, my friend. There is always comfort to be had for troubled souls: it is for those who have no trouble that there is no comfort. The man that has no trouble does not know his need of

a Saviour. All his trouble will come upon him when it is too late. There *may* be trouble and comfort now; there *must* be trouble and no comfort by-and-by."

"But now tell me, which is it, Satan or my conscience, that is telling me that I am too bad,—that I have committed too many sins to be saved?"

"My opinion, John, upon that matter is, that it is Satan making use of your conscience. Conscience says to you that you have committed so many sins; and then Satan says, 'The man that has committed so many sins surely cannot be saved.' Now, if you take my advice, you'll just mind what conscience says to you, and pay no heed to what Satan tells you about it. Let Christ deal with your conscience. And when you confess that you are a dreadful sinner, and have committed an immense number of sins, then

hear how Christ deals with people in such a plight. He says, 'Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' "

"That's not a bad direction to give conscience," said the sick man. "I declare, the thought never struck me before. I always thought of conscience in connection with Satan, but never in connection with Christ."

"There is no other way in which the conscience can have peace," said the old minister, "except in connection with Christ. Satan knows this well. If he can, he will keep the conscience asleep,—that is one way of keeping a man from Christ; and if he can't do that, he makes the conscience so alarmed, and keeps it so alarmed, that a man thinks himself too bad to come to Christ. But there's nothing for the man but to come with

conscience and sin and all, just as he is. Don't forget, John, the starting-point of our talk,—‘And I said, *after* she had done *all* these things, Turn thou to me.’ ”

“That, certainly, was a wonderful speech; and, if one looks into it, one wonders that God ever said it.”

“No one else could have said it, my friend, but Himself. *He had the full right*; and that is a great point to be remembered, if we are to get comfort from such a verse as this. What good would it be to me that a man promised me five thousand dollars to help me in my distress, if he hadn't it to give? He might give me a check for the money; but if he has nothing in the bank, he has no right to do it, and he makes my case worse than it was before; for I find myself befooled as well as ruined. If God had not the fullest right to say ‘After all,’

He would not say it. He would be only mocking us in our misery. He would no longer be a God of truth; and, after having trusted Him with every thing, we should find ourselves ruined at the last. You know, John, that God is very jealous of his own honour."

"Ay, indeed, I believe that. And you're just now bringing up another of my troubles; for I feel how terribly I have offended against his honour, and that He is, so to speak, in honour bound to punish me."

"John Harris, leave God to take care of his own honour. He is better able to take care of it than you are. If He said 'After all,' He knew He *could* say it; and He never would have done so if it would tarnish his own glory. I can show you where you'll find something about that. Just turn over to the epistle to the Romans: that's it next after the

Acts of the Apostles. Now look at the third chapter and the twenty-third verse, and the two following:—‘For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his^a righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.’ ”

“ ‘Through faith in his blood.’ I suppose that means trusting in his death on the cross.”

“Ah! ah! my friend John. So it is you, not I, that have worked round to the cross; but it does not matter which of us does it, round to this it must come

at last. You see how well God took care of his own honour, when He settled a way by which man could be saved. His honour was concerned in being just; and Jesus satisfied his justice by his death upon the cross; so, now, as the apostle says in Acts xiii., 'by Him all that believe are justified from all things.' Yes; though we have been fearful sinners, such is the preciousness of Christ's sacrifice that God can for his sake forgive us all."

"What about my past neglect?" said John Harris.

"ALL THINGS!" shortly answered his friend.

"And my rejection of Christ?"

"ALL THINGS!"

"And my mocking at religion?"

"ALL THINGS!"

"And my dissipation and drink?"

"ALL THINGS!"

“And my ill-treatment of my pious neighbours?”

“ALL THINGS!”

“And my neglect of prayer and God’s house?”

“ALL THINGS!”

“And my having given the best of my days to the service of the devil and sin?”

“ALL THINGS!”

“Come; don’t keep on with the same words.”

“Well, John, I’ll alter them next time.”

“And my horrible blasphemy against the name of Christ?”

“AFTER ALL!”

“And my swearing that I never would be a Christian?”

“‘AFTER ALL!’ ‘AFTER ALL!’ ‘AFTER ALL!’” said the old minister, with light kindling in his eyes, and his two hands lifted up to heaven:—“‘AFTER ALL!’ Go



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